Evolution of Trade Centres in Relation to Changing Trade Activities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines contemporary shopping centres from a critical standpoint as spatial devices of the current global socio-economic system in which public realm is reduced to an active shopping realm. Thus, shopping centres that are spatial instruments of modern consumption culture are being transformed into means of social disintegration by breaking individual from community. Therefore, the aim of the study is to present the spatial characteristics of shopping spaces that emphasize social aspect (which enhances interactions among people) of shopping activity. Along this purpose, the relations between cultural differentiations and shopping activity are analysed within the context of the spatial characteristics of shopping places. In this study, the relationships between traditional urban spaces-contemporary shopping spaces will be examined from the point of spatial aspect of social interactions in city. It is assumed in the study that the spatial characteristics of traditional shopping places in urban space throughout their historical evolution can shed light upon analysing the quality of shopping spaces with capacity to enhance communal coherence, that is to say ‘shopping places with social attributes’. Traditional shopping spaces in Turkey have started to transform along with the importation of the contemporary shopping centres which is one of the recent building types in Turkey emerged after 1980s. Thus, traditional shopping spaces have gradually failed to keep their salient spatial features during this transformation. Hence, a thorough analysis of above-defined transformation is needed as well as the establishment of spatial relations between the traditional and contemporary shopping spaces of a town. To this purpose, it is required to construct an alternative evaluation approach based on the characteristics about spatial qualities of traditional urban fabric.

The major objective of this study is the investigation of spatial characteristics of traditional shopping space. Thus, it is of particular interest to find out spatial characteristics that maintain the unity between shopping activity and social fabric in traditional shopping space (that is the urban space itself in traditional city). Along this path, it is aimed to develop a new evaluation approach for the spatial analysis of shopping spaces. Spatial evaluation approach proposed in the thesis consists of spatial characteristics, which are required by urban fabric-shopping space-social structure unity of pre-industrial town in order to reinterpret them in the contemporary shopping centres. Thus, the problem area was defined in the first chapter of the study. Theoretical framework in which spatial relationships in regard to the concept of ‘shopping places with social attributes’ is evaluated, was clarified in the second chapter. Then, in the third chapter, the study focused on revealing the historical growth of relationships between shopping space-urban space in the both Western and
Anatolian cities. Spatial characteristics and cultural differentiations of shopping activity were elucidated. These characteristics were matched with the spatial characteristics that constitute ‘shopping places with social attributes’. Therefore, a comparative analysis approach was developed in order to specify resemblances and divergences of contemporary shopping spaces with traditional shopping places in Western and Anatolian cities. In the next stage of the third chapter, traditional shopping spaces in Western and Anatolian cities were compared with contemporary shopping spaces from the viewpoint of the spatial features, with social attributes. Therefore, the spatial features of traditional ‘shopping places with social attributes’, were established. In the fourth chapter of the study, these spatial features were systematised through theories of urban design, architectural design and shopping centre design criteria. Consequently, an alternative approach was formulated in order to evaluate the potentials for creating ‘shopping places with social attributes’ in contemporary shopping centres. This approach, at the same time, contains a series of key principles, which can shed light upon achieving unity of urban fabric-shopping space-social structure in contemporary shopping spaces. Balıkesir is selected for the case study in association with the concept of ‘shopping places with social attributes’, which constitutes the problem area of the thesis. In the fifth chapter, the salient features of existing shopping spaces in Balıkesir were examined within the framework of this approach. Thus, it is concluded that the area must be transformed into a shopping place that can enhance social relationships by rehabilitation of the existing spatial fabric. Thus, it is suggested that traditional spatial principles should play determining role for developing design criteria of contemporary shopping spaces.

It is concluded that rehabilitation of the disintegration between urban space and shopping space would facilitate formation of commercially successful shopping spaces for its investors. Also, contemporary shopping spaces would become a building typology that provides physical and spatial medium required for social functions of the city. Therefore, the concept of ‘shopping places with social attributes’ was set forth with its all components, and was developed into a systematic evaluation approach that can be utilised for contemporary shopping spaces.

**Keywords:** Shopping centre, shopping space, social values, traditional urban space, Balıkesir.